

Scripture

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THE HOLY EUCHARIST—I

(Translated from the French by the Editor)

The mystery of the Holy Eucharist is at the centre of our Christian life ; instituted at the Last Supper, celebrated from the beginning by the early church, it contains in a certain sense all the riches of salvation through Christ. In our efforts to explore this mystery we shall first give the exegesis of the texts, and then offer a theological exposition of them. In this first article we wish above all to recall the Last Supper and replace it within its historical setting, in order that we may understand the significance of the words which Our Lord pronounced at it, and the meaning of the actions he performed there. Finally we shall touch on the practice of the first Christians in order to clarify and confirm our conclusions.

1 *The accounts of the Last Supper.* There are four accounts : those of the three synoptic gospels, and that of St Paul in 1 Cor. 11:23-5. St John also tells us about the last meal which Jesus took with his disciples on the eve of his death (John 13-17), but he makes no mention whatsoever of the Eucharist in these chapters. We may suppose that he relied upon what his predecessors had already written so that he could omit any repetition of it, and write at greater length about other examples of Our Lord's tremendous love : the washing of the feet and the farewell discourse. (He does of course speak of the Eucharist in another place (John 6:53-8), to which we will have to return.) Now these four accounts in the Synoptics and St Paul do not form four independent sources. Matthew's appears to be very probably dependent on Mark's, which the former retouches slightly without adding anything essential. Luke's account presents us with a more delicate problem : verses 19-20 correspond almost exactly to the parallel verses in Mark and Matthew, and speak, as they do, of the eucharistic bread and cup. But he prefaces them with verses 15-18 where there is question of the 'Pasch,' that is to say, of the paschal lamb, which Jesus will eat no more, and of a cup of which he will drink no more. Many exegetes have wished, and still wish, to recognise in these verses 15-18 an authentic and original tradition, which Luke alone has preserved, and which would represent another early presentation of

the institution of the Eucharist, or else a remembrance otherwise lost of the beginning of the paschal meal which Jesus celebrated. Others¹ prefer to see in these verses the result of a redaction made by Luke himself, combining the tradition of Mark with that of Paul (1 Cor.), to obtain a judiciously balanced diptych, in which the Jewish Pasch is contrasted with the Christian, the lamb and the cup of the old rite (vv. 15-18) giving place to the bread and cup of the new (vv. 19-20). This exegetical discussion is complicated by the fact that important witnesses among the manuscripts leave out the end of verse 19 and the whole of verse 20. It was fashionable until recently to hold that the shorter text was the authentic one written by Luke; but this opinion is losing favour and more and more critics recognise that the shorter text is a mutilation which cannot claim to represent the original, but which must be explained rather as a correction with a view to having only one cup in Luke's account, as in the parallel texts. Whatever be the truth in this discussion, into which we cannot enter any more here, we may well doubt that the third gospel represents an independent tradition. However interesting its literary presentation may be for a theological understanding, it is difficult to allow it the rank of an autonomous witness, and only two hold the stage: Mark and Paul.

Between these there is no immediate literary dependence one way or the other. They are parallel traditions of which the common features are explained by the common source from which they are derived. Which of the two best represents this? Mark, probably, for the Aramaic flavour of his account shows a very ancient Palestinian origin.² Paul on the other hand seems to pass on the tradition of a 'Hellenistic' church, such as that of Antioch, whilst perhaps contributing certain modifications of his own.

Moreover, it is most important to understand quite clearly that both of them represent *liturgical* traditions: the accounts which they give us are probably couched in the very words which were pronounced in the gatherings at Jerusalem or Antioch when the Lord's Supper was repeated. This is suggested by their context and their literary content. Paul lets it be clearly understood that he is quoting a traditional and fixed text (1 Cor. 11:23; cf. 15:3). Likewise it has been often noted that Mark 14:22-5 is not perfectly at home in its present setting, for the beginning of verse 22 is a repetition of that of verse 18, and the complete absence of any allusion to the paschal lamb seems surprising after the preparations mentioned in

¹ cf. P. Benoit: 'Le Récit de la Cène dans Lc. XXII, 15-20,' in *Revue Biblique* XLVIII (1939), pp. 357-93

² cf. J. Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus*, Oxford, 1955, pp. 118 ff

verses 12-16. In both of them we feel that the text is terse, concise and reduced to the essential, without any claim to recount all that really happened at the Last Supper. It has not been deformed, but it has been simplified. In repeating the Lord's Supper the brethren of the early church have preserved only the important actions, those to which Jesus had attached a new value, whilst abandoning all the rest which belonged to the rite now past. This literary observation is doubly important. In the first place by recognising from Mark's or Paul's pen the very formulas which the first gatherings used to celebrate the Eucharist, it gives their texts a unique and precious quality both authentic and authoritative. In the second place, by granting that these formulas do not claim to tell us everything about the Last Supper, it gives us the right to look in other directions for a reconstitution of the historical framework in which these formulas fit, and from which they derive all their meaning. We feel invited, in other words, to go back beyond the liturgical commemoration, to the concrete reality of the Last Supper, in order to see whether it was a paschal meal, and what light this can throw upon Our Lord's intentions.

2 *Was the Last Supper a paschal meal?* We could have no doubt of this if we limited ourselves to the evidence of the Synoptics. Whether the initiative came from the disciples (Matt. 26:17; Mark 14:12), or from the master (Luke 22:8), in either case it is clearly said that the day had arrived on which the traditional rite must be carried out, and that Jesus intended to keep it. The account of the meal itself makes no explicit allusion, at least in Matthew and Mark, to its paschal character; but we have just seen that this is sufficiently explained by its origin from Christian liturgical practice. Moreover we find indications in the circumstances which surround the central account, which are sufficiently suggestive of a paschal meal: its celebration in the holy city, and not at Bethany, as night fell instead of in the early evening; they were reclining on couches instead of being seated; the bread was broken, not at the very beginning but after the first course (Matt. 26:21-5; Mark 14:17-21); and it was concluded by the singing of the *Hallel* (Matt. 26:30; Mark 14:26).

Nevertheless there are difficulties. The least of them is that arising from the different incidents which the Synoptics themselves put on Friday, which according to them must be the first and great day of the feast. It has indeed been possible to show that none of these proceedings, not even Simon of Cyrene returning from the fields, nor the meeting of the Sanhedrin, nor the execution and the burial of Jesus, were absolutely incompatible with the sanctity of this important day.¹

¹ cf. J. Jeremias, *op. cit.* pp. 49-53

A much more serious difficulty is raised by the explicit statement of the fourth gospel that on the morning of Friday the Jews 'did not go into the pretorium, so as not to be defiled, and so that they could thus eat the paschal lamb' (John 18:28), a statement from which it follows that the paschal meal only took place that year on the evening of Friday and not of Thursday.

Many efforts have been made to solve this contradiction. Sometimes the Synoptics have been judged correct against John: the latter has delayed the paschal meal by one day for theological reasons, in order to have Jesus, the true paschal lamb (cf. John 19:36; 1:29; 1 Cor. 5:7) die at the very moment when the lambs were immolated in the Temple. At other times John has been judged correct against the Synoptics: the latter have anticipated by one day the date of the Pasch, perhaps because Jesus himself had anticipated it in view of his death, so near at hand that it was to prevent him from celebrating it as was usual, on the evening of Friday. Others again have judged them both correct: the Pasch was in actual fact celebrated on two different days, according to the different reckonings of the Pharisees and Sadducees.¹ The discussion is by no means ended, but it is not of primary importance for our purpose. Whether it was celebrated at the usual time or anticipated, there is hardly a doubt in actual fact that the last meal taken by Jesus was held in the atmosphere of the feast of the Pasch, that the Master intended them to coincide, and made use of this for the institution of his new rite. It is therefore important for us to replace the words and actions of Jesus within the setting of the Jewish Pasch, if we wish to explore its full meaning.

We have a good knowledge, thanks to ancient Jewish documents, of the way in which such an important annual rite as this was carried out. Its purpose was to renew, by a commemorative meal, the repast which the Hebrews had taken long ago in Egypt, during that famous night when God had struck His final blow and delivered His people from their long captivity. Then it was a hasty meal, taken standing, with loins girded, sandals on their feet and staff in hand, ready for a journey (Exod. 12:11). Now it was a solemn meal, taken reclining upon couches in the style of free men and not of slaves; the joy of liberation was shown by the unusual splendour of the feast and the significance of the different parts of it, for which appropriate words

¹ Recently Mlle A. Jaubert, relying on an ancient tradition attested by the *Didascalia* and St Epiphanius, has suggested that Our Lord celebrated the Pasch on the Tuesday night, in accordance with an old sacerdotal calendar which seems to have still been in use in Jewish circles from which the Qumran documents came; according to the later and official calendar, the majority of Jews celebrated the Pasch on the Friday night, as in St John. cf. 'La date de la dernière Cène,' *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions*, 1954, pp. 140-73.

served as commentary. At the very beginning a double blessing, for the feast and the wine, was pronounced over the first cup. Then they washed their right hand and ate the first course, a kind of hors-d'oeuvres consisting of bitter herbs dipped in a vinegar sauce and chewed quite deliberately, to recall the bitterness of the years of captivity. Then came the principal part of the meal. But before beginning this the father of the family did not fail to recall the meaning of the feast and the symbolism of the various foods: the unleavened bread was a remembrance of the bread which had not had time to rise on the night of the Exodus; the lamb recalled the first Pasch, whose blood had been put upon the doors of their houses and had thus saved the Hebrews from the blows of the destroying angel (Exod. 12:23); the wine was the symbol of joy and gratitude due to God for His blessings. After this exhortation, which the father of the family continued as long as he pleased, they recited the first part of the *Hallel* (Ps. 113 or 113 and 114), and they drank a second cup of wine. Then they washed both hands and the principal meal began; during it they ate the paschal lamb and the unleavened bread. The beginning and the end of this part of the feast were marked by two actions on the part of the father of the family, which were particularly solemn; at the beginning there was the blessing of the bread, which he broke and distributed to each at table; at the end there was a blessing of thanksgiving over a third cup, which he sent round the guests. This latter action marked the end of the meal; thenceforth it was forbidden to eat anything else, and the custom of a fourth cup is doubtful for Our Lord's time. They then finished the prayer of the *Hallel* (Ps. 114-18 or 115-18).

The reminiscences in the gospel can be placed without difficulty within the setting of this Jewish rite. The announcing of Judas's betrayal fits in very well during the preliminary course (Matt. 26:20-5; Mark 14:17-21), and the morsel which Jesus moistens and gives to the traitor (John 13:21-30) was probably those bitter herbs which they dipped in the vinegar sauce. In spite of what people often think, it was not the Eucharist; Judas goes out at the end of the first course, before the institution (John 13:30). The washing of the feet, which the fourth gospel relates before this, corresponds very well to the ablutions which were performed at the beginning of the preliminary course: Jesus thus took advantage of this rite of purification to give them his example of humble fraternal charity (John 13:2-15; cf. Luke 22:24-7). The words over the bread and wine which Jesus distributed to his disciples are clearly taken from the two solemn blessings which began and concluded the principal part of the meal. This principal part, consisting in the eating of the paschal lamb, has disappeared from the

account because it had disappeared from the practice of the early Christians; nothing has survived except the two actions to which Our Lord had given a new meaning. But the close proximity of these two actions as we have them now must not lead us to forget that they were separated in actual fact.¹ Another consequence of the liturgical character of the gospel account is perhaps the displacing of the 'eschatological pronouncement.' This saying, in which Jesus bids farewell to earthly wine in anticipation of the new wine which he will drink with his followers in the kingdom of God, is found after the words on the Eucharist in Matt. 26:29 and Mark 14:25; but in Luke 22:15-18 it is found before them, and in the form of a farewell to the old rite of the Jewish Pasch: Jesus will eat of this Pasch, that is, this lamb, no more (vv. 15-16); he will drink no more of this wine (vv. 17-18). The reference, understood in this way, whether it be due to an original tradition or to Luke's reconstruction, would link up very well with the double blessing, of the feast and of the wine, which took place at the very beginning of the Jewish rite; and it is possible to suppose that the third gospel has preserved, or rediscovered, the original place for this saying of Our Lord.

3 *The meaning of the Christian Pasch.* The words of the father of the family gave all their meaning to the actions of the paschal rite. Jesus at the Last Supper played the part of the father of the family, and his words must show us his intentions in adopting and transforming the ancient rite. He must certainly have said other things besides the few words preserved in the gospel; but we must trust the early Church and believe that, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, it has handed the essential down to us, sufficient to enlighten us if we can understand it aright.

Jesus gives his life as a sacrifice. The first lesson which stands out in the words of Christ, a lesson concerning which the disciples could not have made a mistake, is that he is going to die and give his life for them. Often already, during the latter part of his ministry, he pointed out to them more and more clearly the violent end which awaited him in Jerusalem: delivered to the Jewish leaders he would perish at the hand of the pagans. But the disciples had always shown themselves incapable of understanding. On this, the eve of his death, he returns to that theme with a new insistence. He begins by telling them that this meal is the last he will take with them: 'I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine' (Mark 14:25), or, more clearly still: 'I have ardently desired to eat this Pasch with you before suffering'

¹ We must note, besides, that Paul's account has retained a trace of this separation, in the words 'after the meal,' which precede the blessing of the cup (1 Cor. 11:25).

(Luke 22:15), a saying where 'suffer' does not mean any ephemeral trial but the passion which must end in death. Then he puts this imminent death, in a sense, before their eyes, by showing them under the bread and the wine his body and blood. The bread and wine are already of themselves rich in symbolism: the bread is broken for distribution; the wine is the 'blood of the grape' (Gen. 49:11), flowing from grapes which are crushed, as blood flows from the vanquished when trodden underfoot (Is. 63:1-6); its red colour, prescribed by the ceremonial of the Pasch, underlines this symbolism. The 'cup' also is the traditional expression for a tragic lot (cf. Mark 10:38; 14:36 and par.; Apoc. 14:10; 16:19). But there is something more, for the separation of the bread and the wine expresses the separation of the body and the blood, that is to say, death.

The teaching given by these actions, already so significant, is heightened still more by the words. This body will be 'given for you' are the words of Our Lord according to Luke 22:19, or 'broken for you' according to some manuscripts of 1 Cor. 11:24; even if these words, not found in Mark and Matthew, are not guaranteed as certain, they undoubtedly express the thought of Jesus, as is shown by the words said over the blood, this time attested by the three Synoptics: 'poured out for a multitude' (Mark, Matt.) or 'poured out for you' (Luke). Our Lord does not give only bread and wine as food; in order to be able to make this gift he begins by giving his body and blood, that is his life. It is clearly to the Father that he gives it, as a sacrifice of expiation and reconciliation: his very words are going to tell us so.

The blood of Jesus seals the new covenant. In the four accounts of the institution the words over the wine link the blood with the covenant; they are in two forms: 'This is my blood of the covenant' (Mark, Matt.) and 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood' (Paul, Luke). The first of these forms, with its Aramaic clumsiness, is probably more archaic, whilst the second gives one the impression of having been arranged. Fundamentally they come to the same thing: a covenant, according to the Semitic idea, must be made 'in blood,' that is to say by the immolation of victims (cf. Gen. 15:17), of which the blood is henceforth called 'blood of the covenant.' This is what had happened at Sinai when Moses, after having offered holocausts and immolated young calves, collected the blood and threw half of it upon the altar and the other half upon the people, with the words: 'This is the blood of the covenant which Yahweh has made with you' (Exod. 24:5-8). It is precisely this former covenant which the feast of the Pasch commemorated along with the deliverance from Egypt. There is therefore no doubt that Our Lord

thought of it when he spoke of the 'blood of the covenant.' But by qualifying 'blood of the covenant' with 'my' he lets it be understood that a new sacrifice is going to be substituted for the one of long ago: his own death; and by that a 'new' covenant will be established, as Paul and Luke explicitly state.

The truth is that the old covenant had become null, not, indeed, through God's fault but His people's, who had shown themselves unfaithful. Rebellious and disobedient, they had had to be chastised and go again into captivity. But at the same time that He punished them, God, ever faithful and merciful, had promised them for the future a pardon which would re-establish the good relations they had lost:

See, the days are coming—oracle of Yahweh—when I shall make a new covenant with the house of Israel. Not like the covenant I made with their fathers on the day I took them by the hand and led them from the land of Egypt. That covenant—My covenant!—it is they who have broken it. . . . Here is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel . . . I shall put My law in the depths of their being, and write it upon their heart. Then I shall be their God and they will be My people. . . . For I am going to forgive their crime and remember no more their sin (Jer. 31:31-4).

The return to the true knowledge and love of God thus promised is nothing other than the kingdom of God, that kingdom whose imminent coming Jesus preached, and which he even said had arrived in his own person, and which he is now going to establish definitively. Since a covenant needs blood, he will give his own; not, indeed, to appease a stern and angry God, but to give that proof of love whereby the God of love desires the rehabilitation of His fallen creatures. For this it was that God sent him, to be the 'Servant' who sacrifices himself in place of his brethren. This, too, Our Lord's words suggest.

Jesus is the 'Servant of Yahweh' who suffers instead of sinners. In demanding an expiation which His justice claims, as does that of the human conscience, God remains so full of love that He Himself provides the victim of expiation. He announced this victim beforehand, in the Book of Isaias, according to the traits of the Servant: 'a man of sorrows,' innocent, yet 'struck by God and humiliated . . . pierced because of our sins, crushed because of our crimes' (Is. 53:3-5). More than once during his ministry Our Lord let it be understood that he was this Servant (Luke 4:17-21; Matt. 11:4-6; cf. Matt. 8:17; 12:18-21). Here also in this last testament he clearly suggests it. Had not God said to His Servant: 'I have marked you as covenant of the people and light of the nations' (Is. 42:6)? And had He not said of him: 'The reason why I will allot him crowds . . . is that he poured out his life in death . . . whilst he bore the faults of the

multitudes and interceded for sinners' (Is. 53:12)? We detect an echo of these oracles on the lips of Jesus: 'This is my blood of the covenant, which is going to be poured out for a multitude.' Thus he is really the Servant, and his impending death will accomplish the mission assigned to him, that of suffering for sinners (Matthew here is more precise: 'for the remission of sins'), for the mass of sinners, for pagans as well as for Jews, in short, for all men. The word which we translate 'multitude' underlines the greatness of the number without excluding anyone. And for another thing, the mission of the Servant was universal: 'It is too small a thing that you should be my servant for bringing back the tribes of Jacob and gathering together again the survivors of Israel. I will make you the light of the nations so that my salvation may reach the ends of the earth' (Is. 49:6). Our Lord certainly made this universality of salvation his own, and it is in fact all humanity to the ends of space and time that he includes within that 'multitude' for which he is going to give his life 'as a ransom' (Matt. 20:28; Mark 10:45).

Jesus gives his life as food. Our Lord could have been content to teach us that his death, as a sacrifice of expiation and as a covenant sacrifice contains all these blessings, by his words. But look how he uses food to convey this lesson: 'Take and eat,' 'Drink of it all of you.' There is something new here, surpassing the imparting of knowledge, and offering another means of communication with the promised sacrifice, a means which is among the most intimate things in human nature, the assimilation of food, from which the body makes its own substance. As a matter of fact, whatever be the value of the symbolism in the bread and wine described above, it would not be sufficient to explain their role here. Jesus does not make use of them simply to illustrate his words; many other symbols would have been more expressive for this purpose. If bread and wine are brought in here, it is not as images but above all as food. We are in the midst of a meal, a religious meal in which the food is given a liturgical efficacy. The ritual of sacrifices among the Jews as throughout the ancient world, already included the eating of a part of the victim by those who had offered it; in this way they united themselves with the Godhead and experienced in a tangible manner the blessings associated with their offering. In the same way in the paschal meal, the sharing in the bitter herbs, the unleavened bread and the lamb, constituted the essential rite. It was more than a mere souvenir, along with a family feast; it was the means whereby they associated themselves in as physical a manner as possible with the events of the Exodus, and with the marvellous deliverance which the ever-living God continued to offer to His people. The words which the father of the family said

over the different foods to explain their meaning gave them in some way a new power ; so much so that by eating them the guests benefited anew and in a personal way from the favours which their fathers had received. We cannot expect less of the new rite which Jesus grafts upon the old Pasch. We can even expect much more, because of something absolutely new, the Incarnation and the Redemption which replaces the deliverance from Egypt with one of an altogether different efficacy. We shall have to return to this crucial point later ; it suffices for the moment that we have emphasised this gift of a spiritual food, made manifest by the words of Our Lord.

Jesus commands his disciples to renew his action. 'Do this in memory of me' Our Lord says, according to Paul and Luke. This order to repeat the rite is missing from Mark and Matthew ; and some critics rely upon this to question the authenticity of these words. They have appeared to them all the more suspect in that they assume a form used in the greco-roman world for the funeral meals celebrated in memory of someone deceased. But this similarity proves at the most that the wording has been borrowed,¹ not the idea. This is something quite different in the case of the Christian meal. It is not simply a commemoration of a departed friend, by means of a banquet, but the renewal of a sacred action by which the sacrifice of the undying Master is made present through the bread and wine. The disciples could not have dared repeat this action to which they attached so great an efficacy, if they had not been invited to do so by their Lord. Moreover he clearly wished to continue his presence among them by this rite, even after he had died and returned to his Father ; but this made a repetition of the rite necessary. In any case it is a fact that from the beginning of the church the Christians repeated the words and actions of the Last Supper, so much so that a liturgical formula was practically fixed by the time the gospels were written and even in the time of St Paul (1 Cor. was written in A.D. 57). Such a practice could not have been established against the wishes of Our Lord. We can thus take this command to repeat the rite as certain, even if the precise wording of it is not guaranteed. It was perhaps not necessarily repeated in the liturgical celebration, since it was sufficient to carry it out : this would explain Paul's using a formula well known to his readers, when he wished to mention it explicitly. However this may be, Jesus certainly wished his followers to renew the rite after he had gone, the rite which he had given them as a legacy on the eve of his passion, and we shall see that they fully responded to his wishes.

¹ Even this is not certain, for there are also good parallels in Aramaic for the formula, which could therefore come from Palestine.

4 *The celebration of the Eucharist in the early communities.* Immediately after Pentecost we see the brethren in the community at Jerusalem gathering together in one another's houses for the 'breaking of bread' (Acts 2:42, 46). We have here a technical term which, whilst in the first place referring to one of the significant actions in a Jewish meal, served in fact among the early Christians to indicate the Eucharist. We find it again, applied to the Sunday liturgy which Paul celebrated at Troas (Acts 20:7-11), and it is not impossible that St Luke is also thinking of the Eucharist when he uses the same expression apropos of the disciples at Emmaus (Luke 24:30, 35) and of Paul on his journey to Rome (Acts 27:35). In Acts 2:46 it is also said that the brethren 'partook of their food with joy,' and there are here two things to be noted: the spiritual gaiety which characterised the eucharistic celebration, and the addition of a complete meal in which they 'partook of food.'

We find these same two details at Corinth, although in a different atmosphere. Here, too, according to 1 Cor. 11:17-34, the Lord's Supper was preceded by another meal where everyone provided his own food and in which joy was not lacking. But there was some disorder and the joy was questionable: 'One man is hungry, whilst another is drunk.' It is understandable that the Church later brought this under control and separated the strictly eucharistic supper from the ordinary fraternal meal, which then became the agape. Already St Paul suggests to the faithful that they stay at home if all they want is to satisfy their hunger (v. 34). Above all he reproves them by recalling to their minds the serious nature of the eucharistic meal: to eat this bread and drink this wine is 'to announce the death of the Lord until he come' (v. 26).

Whatever may be said of these differences which are partly explained by the different situation, we have no reason to see any opposition between the eucharistic celebration at Corinth and that at Jerusalem, as some would do¹; nor must we think there is any opposition between the latter and the ordinary meals which the disciples of Jesus shared with him during his lifetime and also after his resurrection (Luke 24:30, 41-2; John 21:9-13; Acts 1:4). In commemorating the Last Supper the disciples did not claim to be establishing a radically new rite; they continued those common meals in which they had previously been gathered round their Master. These meals of the small group of apostles had always had a religious character, as was the normal thing among the Jews; at them Jesus blessed the food; the last of these meals had been more solemn and more sacred because it was the Pasch, but it was in the same line.

¹ We will return to this question in the next article.

Thus the first community continued quite spontaneously to gather round the Master spiritually present, for the purpose of partaking of their food with joy. Nevertheless there was one feature which was radically new, which transformed these meals and which brought about in them the presence of the Lord in a concrete way: it was the repetition of the words and actions which changed the bread and wine into his body and blood. It was a new rite, but one which was easily grafted on to the fraternal meal, and which omitted the other details of the paschal rite, which had become superfluous and void. This explains, as we have seen, the liturgical accounts which the gospels and St Paul have preserved for us.

These considerations can provide an answer to the questions arising recently apropos of the documents discovered at Qumran. In these writings of a Jewish sect identified with, or at least related to, the Essenes, people have noted that there existed a meal taken in common, with a priest presiding whose duty it was to take the bread and wine before the rest and bless them. Some critics have wanted to see in this a sufficient explanation of the origin of the eucharistic meal which would thus be in no way paschal in character. This conclusion is not compelling in the slightest. This new parallel simply clarifies in an interesting way the kind of community meals which were customary among religious groups of Jews, and which must also have been observed by the apostolic community. It in no way proves that the Last Supper was nothing more; all that we have pointed out concerning the details of its celebration,¹ as well as the ideas formulated by Our Lord, leads us to say that it was wholly steeped in the paschal mystery, not only the mystery of the old Pasch to which Jesus bade farewell, but above all the mystery of the Christian Pasch, which he instituted sacramentally before realising it on the cross.

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¹ It will be noticed that the blessing of the wine is found at the beginning of the meal at Qumran, like that of the bread, whereas according to 1 Cor. 11:25 it comes 'after the meal,' i.e. for the third cup of the paschal meal.

(To be continued)

THE CREATION AND FALL

'In the beginning, *God* created the heavens and the earth' (Gen. 1:1)

I suppose the most difficult section of the whole Bible is the Pentateuch. And I suppose the most difficult book of the whole Pentateuch is the first one, Genesis. And I suppose the most difficult chapters of Genesis are the first three, on the Creation and Fall. Is it possible to say anything worthwhile on these three chapters without getting hopelessly tied up in the difficulties they contain?

The difficulties are real enough, at least as far as modern readers like ourselves are concerned. They stand out a mile. Here is a universe produced from start to finish in six days, when we know that it took millions of years to arrive at the shape in which it is described here. Here is an earth created before the sun, when we know that without the heat of a sun there would not have been an earth. Here is light, too, created before the existence of sun and moon and stars, when we know that they are the cause of light. Here is an earth even covered with vegetation before there is any sun, when we know that without the sun vegetation cannot exist. Here is the brute creation split up conveniently from scratch into domestic animals and wild animals, when we know that there were no domestic animals before man tamed them. Here finally is man, moulded into shape from the very start by the hands of a rather anthropomorphic God, when we know, or at least like to think, that along with the rest of creatures he passed through a long process of evolution. And then you turn the page to Chapter 2, to find that the whole process apparently starts all over again, only this time in an even more impossible order, with man as the first creature to appear on the earth, and vegetation only after he is there to irrigate it, and the brute creation only when God is trying to provide him with a helpmate.

Those are the sort of difficulties that people have thrown up against the first pages of Genesis, with a flourish, as much as to say: 'There, that is all that Moses knew about Science.' But did we honestly expect anything different? Dr Johnson was once asked by a lady how he could ever have allowed a certain mistake to appear in his Dictionary. 'Ignorance, Madam,' he said, 'stark ignorance.' And we might, without disrespect, say the same of the author of Genesis. When it came to palaeontology, botany, zoology, biology or anthropology he was ignorant. And so of course was everybody else until the last few hundred years. I know you will read books which show how in fact the account of creation in Genesis squares exactly with the

findings of modern Science, how in fact modern discoveries were wonderfully anticipated in the Bible. A recent enthusiast has even found that the rib taken from Adam in his sleep corresponds exactly with the separation of the sexes in the primitive cellular life which might be called the pre-conscious life of man ! But these attempts to line up Genesis alongside Science are always faintly ridiculous, like trying to confer a B.Sc. on Moses. The fact is that he knew nothing, or very little, of what modern Science has since discovered. If it had been revealed to him by God he could not even have been understood until this century. And supposing it had been revealed to him, and your Genesis had started off something like this : ' In the beginning, three thousand million years ago, the earth was a flaming mass of gas, shot off into space as a minute particle of a much larger explosion, gradually condensing into a cortex solid enough to allow, after two and a half thousand million years, the first appearance of life . . . ' would you have bothered to read any further ?

No, there is no attempt to be scientific here. The picture which our author has of the world is, if you like, a child's one—an immense tea-tray resting on pillars and covered with an inverted colander. But it is the only one he has, the only one any of his contemporaries had, and therefore the only one which anybody of his time could use if he wanted to tell us anything about the world. And what he wants to tell us is not *how* or *when* the world came to be, or even how or when man came to be. Why should he ? God could well leave us to find that out on our own. He wants to tell us *what* the world is, and *what* man is. And here we really are on to something important.

We are perhaps too accustomed to the religious teaching of Genesis to feel very thrilled by it any more. The religious truths about God and creation and man have become so much part of our own culture and civilisation that they no longer hit us between the eyes. But imagine a world with a rather more depressing philosophy than the one we have grown up in ; where the word 'god' means a whole pantheon of grotesque powers that are constantly at war with each other ; where the elements themselves are deified into something eternal and evil, independent of the gods and hostile to them ; where the universe achieves its present shape only after an interminable struggle between the gods. . . .

Imagine that, and then turn to Genesis, with all its simplicity and calm and grandeur : ' In the beginning, God created heaven and earth and all that they contain.' There is a majestic dignity about such an opening, which introduces the one God of the Hebrews, supreme and eternal, with such sublime assurance that He can be presumed as an

unarguable fact. It is to *Him* that all things owe their existence, so that they appear without effort, at a word from His mouth. Don't let us, with our apologetic mentality, get all worried about the word 'created.' Did the author mean that it all came *directly* from God's hands? Or did he leave room for the gradual development and evolution of the species? We are missing the point. The how and when are bypassed. All that matters here is that the whole universe depends on this one God, that every law of nature is the fulfilment of His command, that there is nothing that has any existence apart from His will. And that is why, as the inventory is made, in all its order and beauty—light and darkness, earth and sky, sea and dry land, trees and vegetation and plants, fish and reptiles, wild beasts and tame—each item is greeted with the refrain, 'And God saw that it was good'; and the catalogue comes to an end with 'And God saw that it was very good.' All of it *His* making and in accordance with *His* will. You will look in vain among the ancient literature of other peoples for such a categorical expression of their faith. This is something unique.

After the creation of the universe, the creation of man. And here the world for which Genesis was written was just as pessimistic. When your universe has been deified into malignant powers that are constantly at war with each other, your man can be little more than a cog in their machine, a pitiful creature whose only reaction to them is fear and a constant concern to placate them. In such a world man's life is cheap, hard, uncertain, and at the mercy of gods who envy him even his happiness.

Again it is that sort of background against which we must re-read Genesis, to appreciate its defence of man's dignity. And how superbly it is done; how well it is, if you like, stage-managed, with man deliberately kept back as the last item, the star turn. In fact he is kept in the wings so long that you hardly expect him to come on any more, with the author committed to six acts, and the sixth already pretty crowded with the production of the whole animal kingdom. But a final fanfare announces the last item: 'Let us make man.' The rest of creation has appeared almost as a divine aside—'Let there be light, let there be a firmament, let the earth bring forth living creatures, and it was so.' But not man. No mass-production for him. He is unique, and demands God's undivided deliberation and attention—'Let US make man.' And 'let us make him in OUR OWN image and likeness.' None of that for the other creatures. They were like the sea they came out of, or the earth on which they swarmed. But man is like God. Man is a reflection of the God who has just been described, someone who shares His goodness, His gift for order, His

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dominion over the rest of creation, His capacity for creating. The mere thought of it is so overpowering that the author suddenly bursts into poetry :

And God created man in His own image
In the image of God He created him
Male and female He created them.

You can hear the applause of the audience.

And if there is a different account of creation in Chapter 2, with man placed first on the list instead of last, don't let us get so excited over the difference that we forget to see the same point being made, that man cannot be lumped along with the rest of creatures. He is unique, and the rest is made for him. And if this time the whole story is more picturesque, with a Divine Potter modelling man with His own hands and breathing into him His own breath, don't let us be so prosaic about it that we miss the main point : man's unique relationship with God. And if that relationship is illustrated even further by the garden in which God walks with Adam in the cool of the evening, don't let us try to find the garden on a map. Could anyone have devised a more dramatic way of presenting the close intimacy with himself that God planned for man from the beginning ? It is we who have made up the myth of an Old Testament God of thunder and terror and fear. It is not so in Genesis.

As with man, so with woman. For the ancient world woman was little more than a superior beast of burden, one of the things a man possessed. You had a horse and some cows and a dozen sheep . . . and a woman. And when that world deified the female principle into a goddess and sanctified sexual excess into an act of worship, woman was only degraded the more. When man made himself the slave of the goddess of sex, woman became the slave of man.

In such an atmosphere our Genesis comes like a breath of fresh air, with its deliberate review of the whole animal world, and man scanning the whole fantastic procession to stress that it is not there that his partner is to be found. We are looking for something fitting the dignity that has been conferred on *him* ; and it is this that God eventually produces, a help 'meet' for him, someone equal in rank to him, who can be his companion and complement. If again this truth is acted out, dramatically, with a Divine Surgeon performing the operation and applying the narcotic, don't let us get hot under the collar. You could hardly find a more vivid symbol of the fact that, as God designed her, woman really is identical in nature with man, bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh, made of the same stuff as he is, equal with him and so worthy of him.

And it is the same with marriage, which is mentioned in the same

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breath with almost a gasp at the beauty of it as God designed it. Woman has been made *for* man, and man is almost incomplete until she finds again that place next to his heart where he misses her. If man has been made the king of creation, it is marriage that has been made to be his crown.

A universe designed by a good God, in which all is order and beauty, of which man is the masterpiece, woman his companion and marriage its crowning beauty : there is the climax which is built up by the first two chapters of Genesis, as an answer to the pessimism of the ancient philosophies. And then comes the anti-climax. Because however much that was God's ideal, the author knows as well as we do that it is not the reality. And so Chapter 3, with the serpent, the tree of knowledge, the apple and the fig-leaves.

Let us remind ourselves again that these chapters are dealing with matters of life and death, however picturesque their detail and however childish their imagery. The author was not trying to answer the question why serpents crawl on their belly when all decent animals have legs. He had a rather more important question on his mind : how a world which had left the hands of God so entirely good could ever have turned into the world we know. And so if he answers by pointing to a certain tree which is 'a delight to the eyes and eagerly to be desired,' we will know that we are dealing with something more than a mere bite out of an apple. The tree is called the 'tree of the knowledge of good and evil,' an apt name for that determination, which lies at the root of all sin, to choose one's own good and evil. The tempter can well suggest to man that its fruit will make him like God. It does indeed. Man alone of all creatures, by choosing his own good and evil, can claim his independence of God. Man alone of all creatures has been made so much in the likeness of God that he can become a caricature of God.

There is the explanation of the evil in the world—man's decision to be his own god. A universe which was created entirely good has become, through man, 'good and evil.' He was the kingpin, and once that has gone there is an end to the equilibrium that God had put in the universe, and in its place there is only tension ; tension between man and God, between man and nature, between man and man, between man and woman, tension even in man himself, his original harmony turned into a lifelong struggle with himself.

The first introduction of the Lord God into this chapter, with his awkward questions, might suggest the accusing finger of an angry parent. And yet it was not at all in anger that he came. Almost the first detail that is mentioned is his care to make clothes for man, to

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cover the embarrassment which sin had left. Quaint enough, but you could hardly find a more charming expression of God's concern and love for man even in his sin. And when the punishment is finally pronounced, it is not man and woman who are cursed but the serpent. The serpent, who had hoped to find in woman an ally, has only her enmity promised to him, and she the assurance that her progeny would make good the harm that she had done in yielding to him, so much so that it would one day conquer him in final defeat and leave him as helpless as a serpent writhing its futile tail round the feet of someone crushing its head. In spite of the tragedy of sin the chapter finishes on that note of optimism that has characterised the whole story from the beginning.

I may have given the impression all along that Genesis made sense only if you contrasted it with the pagan ideas of the time in which it was written. But it will make just as good a contrast, if not a better one, with the pagan ideas of our own time. The ancients had a pretty crude idea of the divinity, but at least they paid him the compliment of respecting him. It needed the modern world to make God after its own image and likeness. The ancient world had a pretty pessimistic view of man's struggle with a hostile universe; but it needed the modern world to raise a hue and cry for man's missing link and forget entirely the link he has with God. The ancient world's worship of sex degraded woman to the level of a beast, and even the Jews, who were taught to see God's angle on it, themselves fell far behind their ideal (the pious Jew in his night prayers still thanks God for not making him a woman). But it needed the modern world to achieve the hypocrisy of talking of the emancipation of woman when it has exaggerated sex to a degree which might have made even the ancients blush. Even we Catholics might well go back to Genesis for an examination of conscience on our own attitude to sex. In the *Opera Omnia* of the great theologian Suarez the index has only one reference under the word Woman: 'cf. *Scandalum*.'

The author of Genesis is not concerned with fairy stories. He is concerned with God's plans for the world and for mankind. He does not set out to teach us the natural sciences. He has quite enough to do to teach us our supernatural science, of the one supreme God to whom everything owes its existence, of man's place in God's scheme, of man's dignity and his failure to live up to it, and of God's love for him even in his sin. The last hundred years have seen a rather sorry history for these chapters. We have covered them with so much sterile criticism on the one hand, and with so much apologetic defence

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on the other, that we have left ourselves no time to listen to this timeless message that the poor author was trying to get across. We are just about coming out of the wood now. Don't let us return to it. Don't let us become so engrossed with our discovery of electricity that we let it eclipse the sunlight.

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'BARABBAS WAS A ROBBER'

Teachers of Sacred Scripture, as of other subjects, often feel the need to introduce into their lectures both the occasional lighter touch that is necessary in all teaching, and that incentive to personal investigation of the Sacred Text itself that is the ultimate aim of all Scripture teaching. One of the ways in which they might do this is the demonstration in actual working-out of the meaning of a term or phrase occurring in Sacred Scripture, which is at once not serious enough to matter very much anyway and yet sufficiently topical, or whatever it may be, to arouse and hold the interest of the student. It is suggested that the following notes may serve as an example of what can be done in this line of 'detection' by both teacher and pupil without much more equipment than a very rudimentary knowledge of the Greek language and access to a few good dictionaries and commentaries. New Testament experts—for whom this is not written—will, of course, recognise the source of the impulse to undertake this particular piece of detective work in Pickl's *The Messiah*, and suspect the present urge to put it in print as originating in the notes of the new translation of the New Testament into English published by the Jesuit Father Kleist and my own confrère Father Joseph Lilly in America.

Who was Barabbas? At least the average clerical student, and perhaps even the educated Catholic layman, hearing this question, will at once remember the Chronista singing *Erat autem Barabbas latro* in the Passion on Good Friday, call on the remnants of a classical schooling, add the resources of Cabrol and his *Holy Week Book*, and answer triumphantly that St John says 'Barabbas was a robber' and that settles that! But did he? And does it?

St John, after all, did not write in the Latin of the *Missale Romanum* or in the English of Cabrol's *Holy Week Book*. What he actually said was *en de ho Barabbas lestes*, and the real question is: does that mean

'now Barabbas was a robber'? And that is a point that might be very much disputed.

The first step in the solution of this little problem is, obviously, to blow the dust off our old friend *Liddell and Scott* and see what, according to it, is the meaning of *lestes*. There we find that 'robber' and 'robbery' do indeed figure among the meanings, and the primary meanings, of *lestes*. But we find also 'plunderer, pirate, buccaneer,' and these are by no means all the same thing. We find that Thucydides 'notes that there was in early times no disgrace in the occupation' of *lestes*. And we find Liddell and Scott both reminded of Shakespeare's phrase 'convey the wise it call'—and we still wonder what we should 'it call.' We have a vague feeling, for instance, that even the one word 'pirate' applied to Sir Francis Drake meant altogether different things according as the speaker was Queen Elizabeth or Philip II of Spain. But we find—our first clue?—that it is also used of 'irregular troops,' as was the Latin *latro*. Souter's *Pocket Lexicon* gives us two more words to add to our growing list, 'a brigand, a bandit.' We don't really get much help from Moulton and Milligan's *Vocabulary*, but we do note in passing that *lestopiastes* is 'an officer detailed for *special service* in the search for *certain criminals*' (my italics) in a third-century B.C. papyrus, and that a late second-century A.D. papyrus uses *lestarchos*, an 'arch-pirate,' metaphorically. And we are still wondering what St John had in mind when he said *en de ho Barabbas lestes*!

We now recall the great rule of interpretation: that Scripture is mostly its own best interpreter. Does St John use the term anywhere else? We look at our Greek Concordance and we find that he also uses it in 10:1, where he makes Our Lord say of the man who gets into the fold by the back door: *kleptes esti kai lestes*. Liddell and Scott had suggested a certain antithesis in the two words so they can't mean *quite* the same thing, and the fact that *kleptes* is the one that has come down in English makes us wonder whether that is not the more reprehensible one; or is it just the question of physical force? He uses it also in verse 8 of the same chapter, in the plural, but in exactly the same context, so that does not help us very much. St Paul (2 Cor. 11:26) was 'in peril from *lestai*,' but that does not tell us much either, except that since they were people he expected to meet on his journeyings they were either 'pirates' or, perhaps, 'highwaymen,' as far as there being a danger to him was concerned. In Matt. 21:13 we find the Temple's being made *spelaion leston*¹—'a brigands' cave' is probably the meaning of the original and of the LXX. Only when

¹ 'Brigands,' 'highwaymen,' *tout court*, are only doubtfully in context in Luke 10, in the story of the Good Samaritan.

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we turn to the Synoptists on the Passion do we really begin to get some help—and that, after all, is more directly relevant to the interpretation of the phrase in St John.

Matt. 26:55 and the parallels, Mark 14:48 and Luke 22:52, all render the words of Our Lord to the heavily armed party that came out to apprehend him as: ‘You are come out, *hos epi lesten*, with swords and clubs, to arrest me.’ Would such a show of force be necessary for the apprehension of a mere ‘robber’? And was it, perhaps, some nuance in the (presumably Aramaic) words of Our Lord that caused the immediate flight of the disciples that the display of force alone did not suffice to bring about? Can we find anything more direct in the Synoptists?

We remember then the miserable attempt of Pilate to set Our Lord free, and we find St Matthew saying of Barabbas, in our Douay version, that he was ‘a notorious prisoner,’ *desmion episemon* (26:16). Back we go to our books once more. Moulton and Milligan are again not too helpful; they merely refer to the ‘N.T. sense of “prisoner”’ of *desmios* (without telling us why we should assume that *desmios* means ‘prisoner’ in the N.T., at any rate, always)—but there are all kinds of prisoners and that mere fact does not automatically make Barabbas a ‘robber.’ *Episemos*, however, in the same source, makes us wonder where the Douay got its ‘notorious’; certainly not from the Latin *insignem* which does not necessarily, or even normally, mean ‘notorious.’ *Desmios* is an adjective, say Liddell and Scott, meaning ‘bound, in bonds, captive,’ and it puts the figurative sense of this in the first place. When we come to *episemos* in that work we find that the primary meaning of it when referred to persons is ‘notable, remarkable, glorious; Latin *insignis*,’ and that what it calls the ‘bad sense’ is only secondary. It, too, is an adjective. Could it be, therefore, that *this* is the adjective used as a noun in St Matthew and that what Pilate had in the background was not ‘a notorious prisoner’ but ‘a captive leader’? And would not this make more sense? Would the Jews, even under the influence of the priests and the Pharisees, be as likely to clamour for the release of ‘a notorious prisoner’ as they would for ‘a captive leader’? And if you say: would Pilate, trying to release Jesus, be likely to offer them someone they were likely to accept? can we not answer: Pilate knew that it was the priests and the Pharisees rather than the people who sought the death of Jesus, and—he never did understand the Jews—thought the priests would be afraid to come out openly on the side of ‘a captive leader’ for fear of the Romans? That kind of scoffing cynicism would suit him. And he could have had a cognate reason also, of which more later.

Mark gives us our first real clue, even in the Douay (15:7). He tells us that Barabbas was 'put in prison with some seditious men, who in the sedition had committed murder,' though the English leaves it doubtful whether he or they had committed the murder. The Greek, however, conjures up a much more definite picture. 'There was the man called Barabbas—*en de ho legomenos Barabbas*—imprisoned *meta ton stasiaston* (and again note the definite article: we are dealing with well-known characters), these latter having committed *phonon, en te stasei*' (and again the definite article, without even an *autôn* added).¹ After all, when you talk of 'sedition' you are, at least linguistically, taking sides. And it was St Jerome and the Douay who used the term, not St Mark's Greek. And one can use a term of this kind without necessarily sympathising with those in authority. And the *phonon* which they committed is not necessarily 'murder'—and even if it were, one could still use it in certain contexts without necessarily sharing in the moral connotation thereby implied—and even if one did share in the moral connotation one could still do so without taking sides against the (objective) murderer's aims and views; one could be on his side and deplore that he did this deliberately; one could still more strongly sympathise with his aims and objectives while regretting the accident, legally 'murder,' that took place as he sought to realise them, however misguidedly. One man's quisling is another man's hero; one man's maquis are another man's bandits; one man's murder is another man's execution. It is not necessarily as simple as it may seem at first. And all the witnesses are agreed that Barabbas was in prison for *stasis*, a 'riot' if you were a Roman, and a seditious and treacherous riot, to boot, but a 'rising' if you were a Jew—and, after all, three of the Evangelists were Jews. And one would like to know where the Master, Lagrange, got the idea, so definitely expressed in the comment: 'But it is certain that the historical fact has no special importance in his eyes' (i.e. Mark's eyes).²

Can we get any lights from outside the New Testament on this word? The most obvious source to turn to first is Josephus. Does he use the word *lestes*? He does, with the cognate *lestrikos*, and in a context which exactly fits the circumstances, in so far as we have now reached them, of Barabbas and his friends being in prison. He uses it to describe the members of the *Freedom Bands* with which (if you were a Roman) Palestine was infested at the time, and which (if you were a Jew) showed that the spirit of the nation was not dead yet. Perhaps not the same people, but certainly people animated by the

¹ Is it fanciful to translate *hoitines en te stasei phonon pepoikeisan* as 'those people, that is, who killed people during the Rising'?

² *Evangelie selon saint Marc*, in loc.

same spirit, he calls ‘zealots’—and one of the Apostles was surnamed ‘the Zealot.’ They were strongest in turbulent Galilee—and most of the Apostles were Galileans. And they did not get on at all well with the priests and the Pharisees—which may be an added reason why Pilate thought he was being really crafty in asking the priests and the Pharisees to choose between Christ and his ‘captive leader’ of the *lestai*, his *archilestes*, his *episemos* (the terms are used by Josephus to describe the chiefs of the *lestai*), Barabbas.

Is it likely, then, that on a matter of no doctrinal importance Matthew (writing originally for Jews in Palestine, tradition says), Mark, Luke and John (writing for Christian communities with a large Jewish element in them) would gratuitously go out of their way to use terms to describe Barabbas which *had* to be understood in a sense that would offend the nationalist susceptibilities of at least some of their fellow-Christians and (for three of them) their fellow-countrymen? Is there any real ground for suggesting that they necessarily sided with the Romans? Whatever they may have thought privately about the rights and wrongs of the Jew *versus* Roman dispute, is not the balance of favour altogether on the side of so taking their words as to see that while they may well have deplored the means adopted they would still sympathise with the men of their own small nation in their struggle against the big battalions? Is it not even more fitting that way? Textual criticism aside—and there, too, one finds Lagrange’s interpretation of Origen’s remark rather extraordinary—is not Pilate’s offer really: Whom do you wish that I release for you, Jesus Barabbas or Jesus called Christ? Is it not more fitting, more what we should expect, that the Evangelists would show us, as actually happened, that the Jews were led to reject the true Messiah in favour of false Messianic hopes summed up in and symbolised by Barabbas and his kind, that they preferred to the Son of God not a mere ‘robber’ but what the Romans called a ‘rebel’ and what the Jews doubtless, if the term had been invented in their day, would have referred to as ‘one of the maquis’? ‘Now Barabbas was a rebel,’ and while you may, if you will, add a footnote to that translation indicating your personal, and private, opinion that St John had no use for rebels, you should not so translate his words as to import into them, as if there of necessity, a moral and political connotation which St John cannot be shown to have had in mind at all when he said of the man preferred to Our Divine Lord, not ‘Barabbas was a robber’ but *en de ho Barabbas lestes*.

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BOOK REVIEWS

La sainte Bible, traduite en français sous la direction de L'École Biblique de Jérusalem. Les éditions du Cerf, Paris 1956. Pp. 1,688, plus 8 pages de cartes, format 19.5 × 21.5 cm., sur papier bible, relié. 1.800 fr.

The appearance of this one-volume edition of the Jerusalem Bible marks the climax of a most notable achievement in the history of Catholic Biblical scholarship. I hope it will also be regarded as a monument to the memory of Père Lagrange, the value of whose pioneer work for Catholic exegesis at a critical time, can never be sufficiently appreciated. It might well do so, for this French version has been produced under the guiding influence of the *École Biblique* which he founded in Jerusalem, and which has fulfilled so wonderfully the promise of which Leo XIII spoke in 1892. During the past half-century this Dominican house of studies has assisted Catholic exegetes throughout the world; they have learned to rely upon the *École Biblique* for the solidly scientific yet deeply theological interpretation of the Bible, which has contributed so much to the reflowering of theology.

Much of their scholarship is naturally beyond the reach of the ordinary Catholic, but the Jerusalem Bible will remedy this to a great extent. Since 1946 this French translation has appeared in forty-three separate parts, and its quality has been universally recognised. The aim has been to produce a translation which is as faithful as possible to the original text, and at the same time reproduces the beauty and variety of Biblical styles. To carry this out has been the task of the most competent Catholic exegetes in France, aided by scholars who have watched over the quality of language employed. Each of these fascicules has an introduction and notes which provide a scholarly commentary for the interpretation of the text. This feature is probably the one which those already acquainted with the Jerusalem Bible will treasure most. In these introductions and notes we have been able to enjoy the benefits of the progress made during the last decades. Within a comparatively small compass they have provided a reliable and enlightening commentary on the whole Bible. Thus, to single out just one or two examples, De Vaux's introduction to the Pentateuch, prefacing the translation of Genesis, is a fine summary of the difficult question concerning the literary composition of the Pentateuch. In a long introduction to the Psalms Tournay discusses such points as the different literary forms to be found there, the origin and liturgical

use, significant for their correct interpretation, and the foreign influences which contributed to their composition. In his introduction to the gospel of St Matthew Benoit gives us a clear appreciation of the synoptic problem. A particularly valuable feature of all the introductions is the consideration of the theological doctrine of each book.

Those who have benefited by these separate parts will wish to know how much of these introductions and notes has been retained in the one-volume edition. In preparing this, during the past two years, certain principles have been followed. The translation itself is substantially unchanged, though many details have been altered in order to unify the version of the whole Bible. Thus whenever the context allowed, differences in translating the same original word have been eliminated; parallel texts have been carefully revised with a view to preserving the resemblances and the divergences found in the originals. Obviously the introductions and notes have had to be abbreviated, but let it be stated immediately that this has not been nearly so drastic as many feared it might be. Much space has been saved by discussing a particular point in a full note, to which reference is made in all other instances throughout the Bible when this same point is raised. The notes have also been shortened by the omission of some details concerning textual criticism, literary composition, historical background and extra-Biblical sources. The introductions have suffered most. Those in the present volume are a synthesis of the ones which appeared previously, but they have inevitably been considerably shortened. Thus introductions to the individual books of the Pentateuch are omitted, and replaced by one general one; the twelve historical books are grouped under four introductions; the synoptic gospels and the epistles of St Paul have each a general introduction only. The group of prophetic books is preceded by an introduction, which, however, includes a short section on each individual book. Clearly, then, this volume does not replace the 43-fascicule edition. But the abbreviated introductions offer what is essential, and in simpler form, for the general reader. He will be greatly helped by the frequent divisions of the text, by means of headings which summarise the contents of the following section. This dividing of the text constitutes a considerable commentary in itself. As further aids there is an abundance of cross-references given in the margins, and the volume is completed by detailed tables setting out the chronology of the whole period covered by the Bible, the calendar, weights, measures and coinages. There is a most useful index to the more important notes, and several maps. The book is beautifully produced on Bible paper, the poetical books being set out one column to the page, which is particularly impressive in the Psalter.

It is hard to imagine how more could be offered to the Catholic who wishes to deepen his knowledge and love of God's word, within the limits of a single volume. This same text is due to appear as a pocket edition with greatly abbreviated notes, but the notes are too valuable to be easily discarded. It is a great misfortune that those readers of *Scripture* who cannot read French, will be deprived of this most valuable edition of the Bible. The benefits accruing to English Catholics from a translation of the Jerusalem Bible would be immense. Let us hope that such a translation, already contemplated, will appear without too long a delay.

T. WORDEN

Jean Guitton, *The Problem of Jesus*, tr. A. Gordon Smith. Burns-Oates, London 1955. Pp. 239. 21s.

In this difficult book Professor Guitton adopts the attitude of a sincere unbelieving inquirer into the facts narrated in the New Testament who is prepared to admit after sincere criticism what he sees to be certain. There are three distinct parts to the book.

In Part I he adopts first of all the critical approach to the Gospels; what is contradictory to the laws of nature is rejected as impossible, unhistorical, subjective; the Christian faith is explained by a process of progressive idealism whereby Christ is sublimated from the human to the divine. This position has to be abandoned because of its inherent lack of logic, its prejudice in the selection of evidence and because it is contradicted by the earliest documents which betray no such process but show belief in Christ's divinity from the beginning.

The opposite approach, the mythological, is next adopted; the idea of Jesus-God came first, the facts narrated were later inventions and fabrications. This theory too has to be discarded since the Gospel narratives contain too many historical details, both political and religious, to be the projections of a later age and show none of the characteristics (hero-worship) of fabrication—rather the opposite is the case in the synoptic narratives.

In Part II the problem of Christ's Divinity is examined. The traditional method of establishing this is set aside. The probative value of miracles is minimised and there is a failure to note their necessity as a means to the acceptance of Christ's claims. Prophecy is also ruled out as a proof and only declarations of His Divinity by Our Lord himself are considered valid proofs. In the selection of these 'logia' prudence has to be exercised to avoid interpolations; hence only texts which apparently conflict with the mentality of the

Evangelists and which could be tolerated by a fiercely monotheistic Jewish audience unprepared for a divine Messiah, can be accepted as historical; hence the choice of 'incidental' texts in which Christ implicitly asserts his Divinity. In his conclusions from the examination of the texts the author is over-cautious, so much so that his logic is suspect. There is a concluding section on the impact of St Paul and the Joannine Gospel on the Christian Community and here again the author is over-cautious in his summing-up of Paul's assertions of Christ's Divinity.

In Part III the Resurrection is subjected to criticism. Besides an examination of the testimony and its development, which is not well done, it contains many philosophical speculations on the nature of resurrection, body, mystical experience and apparition. Much of this is obscure and frequently unintelligible even to the educated reader.

The book obviously suffers from the fact that it is an abridgment of a two-volume work and from the fact that it is a translation. It is sadly lacking in references and is much too obscure to be a real contribution to English literature on Our Lord.

T. HANLON

The Holy Bible, translated from the original languages with critical use of all the ancient sources, by members of the Catholic Biblical Association of America. Vol. III, *The Sapiential Books*: Job to Sirach. St Anthony Guild Press, Paterson, New Jersey, 1955. Pp. 712. \$5.00.

'Of translations there is no end' would appear to be a reasonable up-to-date modification of the words of Ecclesiastes (12:12), and according to many, every new translation merely adds to the pile of Biblical confusion. Banish the thought! Every attempt at translation implies an effort to clarify God's word, and every translation achieved develops our understanding of that word. This is the explicit aim of the Episcopal committee of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, the sponsors of this new American translation. Accordingly the C.B.A. has commissioned a group of its members to render the Scriptures from the original language into the vernacular, being scrupulous to observe 'a rigorous fidelity to the meaning of the original, expressed in simple and intelligible language.' The achievement, at least as far as this volume is concerned, does not belie the hope these words express.

A visitor recently picked up the book from my table and after a long silence apologised for having been so absorbed, remarking: 'What a clear and interesting translation of Proverbs!' The tribute

was spontaneous and deserved. Compare, for instance, the Douay : 'He that winketh with the eye shall cause sorrow : and the foolish in lips shall be beaten,' with the Confraternity Version's 'He who winks at a fault causes trouble, but he who frankly reproves promotes peace.' Here the C.V. has followed, in the second stichos, the more probable LXX reading which brings out the antithesis and makes far better sense. Wisely the textual notes which indicate the provenance of such readings are added as an appendix. They are there for the critical reader, but are kept out of the way so as not to intrude themselves upon the ordinary reader. When the book is reprinted it would be useful if the pages of these textual notes could be headed by the title of the books concerned. This would facilitate reference to them. The introductory notes to the individual wisdom books have been kept short and thus made more effective. They provide for each book the basic information as to date and authorship, as well as its purpose and character. In this respect the introduction to the Canticle of Canticles is particularly effective.

The text is neatly divided into sections with carefully chosen headings to facilitate continuous reading. They are so well chosen that they serve as rails to keep the train of thought in the right direction. The notes explaining the text, although few in number, are adequate ; they occur when needed, in fact when expected, and they deal with the problems that would occur to the mind of the average reader. For instance there is the apparent contradiction in Prov. 26:4-5 : 'Answer not the fool according to his folly, lest you too become like him,' and then : 'Answer the fool according to his folly, lest he become wise in his own eyes.' The notes tell you that 'there is no contradiction. . . . In any answer the wise man gives he must protect his own interest against the fool.'

The translation of the Psalms reproduces the directness, balance and simplicity of the original. In accordance with modern usage the second person plural has been used throughout instead of the usual 'Thou, thy'. For instance Psalm 103 begins : 'Bless the Lord, O my soul ! O Lord, my God, you are great indeed ! You are clothed with majesty and glory, robed in light as with a cloak.'

Here and ~~there~~ one is puzzled by a translation ; for instance in Prov. 8:23 one would have expected 'set up' as in Ps. 2:6 where the same verb is used. Instead one finds the obscure 'poured forth.' Then there is the eternal question of the 'spelings' like 'marvelous' and so on, and while one becomes accustomed to these it is quite otherwise with words like 'plow' !

But such matters are small. This volume makes scripture reading easy, enjoyable and profitable : it provides the stiles and the bridges

BOOK REVIEWS

and we can wander, unhampered, in the Bible country. May we hope that soon the whole O.T. will be brought out in one volume, complete with the introductions and notes, at a price comparable with that of the N.T. already published. The C.B.A. and the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine are to be congratulated on an excellent work.

R. J. FOSTER

Max. Zerwick, s.j., *Analysis Philologica Novi Testamenti Graeci*. Pontificio Istituto Biblico, Romae 1953. Pp. xv + 608.

In this work of minute and painstaking industry Fr Zerwick takes us systematically through every book of the New Testament. He explains the grammatical form of every word, and gives its Latin translation, adding in many cases the German, French or English equivalent. For beginners in Biblical Greek practically all verbal forms are explained, and all words as they occur apart from constantly recurring words which are listed in the introduction. The distinction between first and second aorist is always noted, attention is very frequently drawn to the derivation of words, in many cases almost the entire range of meanings is indicated besides the force the word has in its immediate context. For those who are interested in the Semitic or Hellenist characteristics of Biblical Greek, the latter are nearly always noted with references to Fr Zerwick's *Graecitas Biblica* for a fuller treatment. Yet the work is not purely philological or grammatical. It has to a great extent the qualities of a commentary. The author has not passed over any obscurity of the text without suggesting one or other interpretation, or at least making plain the difficulty.

It would be impossible to pay adequate tribute to the scholarship and industry that have gone to the making of this work. The typographical presentation, too, is in every way excellent. It should prove an invaluable, not to say indispensable, adjunct to New Testament studies.

P. J. MORRIS

Stier, Fridolin, *Das Buch Iyyob, hebräisch und deutsch*, übertragen ausgelegt und mit Text—und Sacherläuterungen versehen. München (Kösel-Verlag) 1954. Pp. 362. Price not stated.

The production of this book has been a labour of love, it would seem, both to the author and the publisher. The book is superbly,

but not sumptuously, produced. Excellent Hebrew and Roman type on paper of high quality present a most pleasing aspect to the eye. The unpointed Hebrew text on the left-hand page is so disposed that the verses are divided into *cola*, and each *colon* is printed on a separate line with a generous space between the verses. This is faced on the right-hand page by the German version similarly arranged. This generous outlay of the text demands 204 pages, divided equally between the Hebrew original and the German translation. There follows a general exposition of the theme of the book, pp. 217-57. Then comes the introduction consisting of comments and explanations of text and sense, pp. 260-353. The final section, pp. 357-62, is labelled 'Postscriptum.' The reader might expect to find here an epilogue, but is in fact given information about the principles followed by the author. Incidentally it is interesting to note that the reproduction of the Hebrew text is due to the publisher's desire to produce the volume in the most worthy manner. The author rightly conceives that a translation should as far as possible not merely reproduce the general sense as may be done by a paraphrase but should keep close to the style and expression of the original. Thus it is pointed out, in 10:17 the Hebrew has 'Thou dost increase thine anger against me' and not, as in G. Fohrer's beautiful translation 'Thou wouldst give fresh fuel to thine indignation.' That is to say, the Bible should be allowed to speak in its own language in a translation, unvarnished and unadorned.

The translation is powerful, concise, accurate. To the native German must be left a final judgment on such a word as *Allwalt* chosen as the equivalent of *Shaddai*. Its choice here is due to the consideration that it is as ancient as *Shaddai* was for the Hebrews, suitable as a proper name and easily adapted to harmonious rhythm, on which the translator rightly lays great stress. The notes are relatively brief. It is only too easy with a book like Job to drown the original in a sea of comment and conjecture. The interpretation and comments manifest a calm, judicious mind. Some of the conclusions may be mentioned. It is considered impossible to date the book. The author was either an Edomite—the opinion favoured by Stier—or an Israelite in Edomite garments. The author was a man who had suffered as the original Job had suffered; and the dialogue is not fictional but real—not that of the original Job but that of the author in dispute with his friends. The imperfection of the third cycle of speeches—the silence of Sophar and the few words of Bildad—is due to the friends' inability further to sustain their case against Job.

The view expressed in 6:30 that eye, ear, mouth are regarded as partially independent agents, not simply as instrumental parts of the

living human being, does not harmonise with the Hebrew conception of man as a living unit. Poetry uses language that author and reader alike know, does not bear the same meaning the words might have in bald prose. The Hebrews knew, as we know, that though the eye sees and the ear hears, the person sees and hears through their entirely dependent instrumentality. The discussion of the celebrated difficulty in 19:26 makes no use of the suggestion given in *Biblica* xxxi (1950), 377—unfortunately, in the opinion of the reviewer. This keeps the text intact but by correcting the order of the words yields a sense entirely suitable to the context. So great is Job's confidence in the ultimate vindication of his righteousness by God that he exclaims, 'And should my skin be stripped from my flesh, Even after that I shall see God.'

The book has no preface and no index, the absence of the latter being no novelty in a commentary. The author's name appears neither on the spine nor on the title-page, but is modestly hidden away on the reverse of the latter. The ecclesiastical approbation is mentioned on the same page. Misprints are rare. One occurs in the Hebrew text of 10:11 and another in the Hebrew of the note on 10:1. All said, therefore, those interested in the book of Job will find this volume a pleasure to handle and to read, especially if they appreciate fine German writing.

EDMUND F. SUTCLIFFE, S.J.

BOOKS RECEIVED

(The mention of books in this list neither implies nor precludes subsequent review)

A. Clamer, *La Sainte Bible*, Tome I, 2e partie, *Exode*. Letouzey et Ané, Paris 1956. Pp. 302. Price not stated.

R. Knox, *A New Testament Commentary for English Readers*, vol. 3, *The Later Epistles, The Apocalypse*. Burns Oates and Washbourne Ltd, London 1956. Pp. 243. 21s.

B. Leeming, *Principles of Sacramental Theology*. Longmans, London 1956. Pp. 690. 30s.

This book will surely rank as one of the best sources for this part of theology which has ever appeared. Students will find here patristic and theological opinions judiciously chosen and far more generously quoted than they could ever have hoped for in a book so moderately priced. And the careful attention given to the opinions of non-Catholic English theologians is quite unique. This latter reason alone will make it invaluable to students of theology; and in this respect we hope that it marks a turning-point in Catholic theological scholarship.

Mother Mary Eaton, *The Bible Beautiful*. Longmans, London 1956. Pp. 440. 7s. 6d.

This is a new impression of a book of selections from the Douay Version of the Old Testament, first published in 1930. It gives the entire history of the Jewish people, from Genesis to the Machabees, with copious extracts from the Psalms, the Prophets and the Sapiential Books, in nothing but the words of Holy Scripture, and it is claimed that no part of the Sacred Narrative likely to appeal to the young has been omitted.

Maisie Ward, *They Saw His Glory*. Sheed and Ward, London 1956. Pp. 278. 16s.

The author's aim is to help the educated layman to read the four Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles in the light both of the Church's age-long meditation on them and of the work of modern scholars, with especial reference to the archaeologists whose labours have done so much not only to supplement but to correct the findings of the historians and textual critics.

